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TELEGRAM

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AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

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//ZFF4 BEIRUT AND TEL AVIV ONLY//

E.O. 12356 N/A

TAGS: OPRC

SUBJECT: *DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING APRIL 17, 1984*

FOR ADDRESSEE POSTS' INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE, FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM TODAY'S PRESS BRIEFING. SPOKESMAN WAS JOHN HUGHES.

Q. THE LONDON TIMES PUBLISHED A REPORT SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL HAD ALREADY EXTENDED THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THEM FOR FIVE YEARS MORE, AND THAT THE MEMORANDUM HAD BEEN EVEN EXPANDED SOMEHOW TO GIVE ISRAEL MORE PRIVILEGES. NOTHING HAS BEEN PUBLISHED AT ALL IN THIS COUNTRY.

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON IT.

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Q. THERE IS A WIRE SERVICE REPORT THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE BOMBERS POISED ON THE AFGHANISTAN BORDER FOR A POSSIBLE SPRING OFFENSIVE. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT?

A. BE GLAD TO GIVE YOU WHAT I HAVE. IN AFGHANISTAN THERE GENERALLY IS A WINTER LULL IN THE FIGHTING BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN FORCES AND THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE, WHICH HAS DONE VERY WELL IN KEEPING

THE SOVIETS FROM ACHIEVING THEIR OBJECTIVES IN AFGHANI-

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STAN.

THE SOVIETS CONTROL THEIR MILITARY BASES AND MAJOR TRANSPORTATION ROUTES, AND HOLD THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE MAJOR CITIES, ESPECIALLY KABUL. BUT THE RESISTANCE CONTROLS ABOUT 75 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRYSIDE AND OPERATES IN ALL CITIES, EXERCISING SIGNIFICANT CONTROL OVER SOME.

USUALLY AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR THE PACE OF THE FIGHTING PICKS UP THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, BUT SO FAR WE HAVE HAD NO CONFIRMATION THAT MAJOR OFFENSIVES OR OPERATIONS HAVE BEGUN. CERTAINLY, GIVEN THE SOVIETS' LACK OF SUCCESS AGAINST THE RESISTANCE OR MUJAHIDIN, ONE MIGHT EXPECT THEM TO TRY NEW TACTICS SUCH AS THE HIGH-ALTITUDE BOMBING DESCRIBED IN THE REPORT YOU MENTIONED. THIS WOULD BE AN ESCALATION OF DESTRUCTIVE ANTI-CIVILIAN SOVIET WARFARE. DURING 1983 WE NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS USED INCREASINGLY BRUTAL TACTICS AGAINST CIVILIAN TARGETS IN AREAS SUSPECTED OF STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE RESISTANCE AND OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE.

THE MAJOR POINT IS THAT THE STRUGGLE IN AFGHANISTAN CONTINUES UNABATED: THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO DEFEAT THE RESISTANCE, AND THEY MAY BE CONSIDERING NEW MILITARY TACTICS. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE IN
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AFGHANISTAN HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED TO ACHIEVE A NEGOTIATED POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN TO GET THE SOVIET FORCES OUT AND TO END THE TORMENT OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. THIS REMAINS THE GOAL OF UNITED STATES POLICY.

Q. CAN WE CONFIRM THE BOMBERS?

A. NO, CAN'T CONFIRM....

Q. THERE IS A LONG STORY ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE WASHINGTON POST THIS MORNING ABOUT SOUTHERN LEBANON BEING CUT OFF COMPLETELY FROM OTHER PARTS OF LEBANON BY THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THAT?

A. NO, I DON'T.

Q. GOING BACK TO MY COLLEAGUE'S EARLIER QUESTION, IS THERE

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A ROLE, OR IS ISRAEL DESTINED TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW ANTI-TERRORIST ORDINANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST? WILL THE UNITED STATES BE RELYING ON THE ACTIVITIES OR THE INPUT FROM ISRAEL MORE THAN BEFORE?

A. WELL, THERE ARE SEVERAL PARTS TO THAT. FIRST, I'M NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON ALLEGED PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVES ON TERRORISM. YOU KNOW OUR ATTITUDE ON THAT. YOU KNOW WHAT ISRAEL DOES IN THE FIELD OF TERRORISM, BUT THERE IS NO LINK BETWEEN OUR OWN PLANS AND THE WAY ISRAEL HANDLES ITS INSTANCES OF TERRORISM.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON WHAT'S HAPPENED IN LONDON THIS MORNING?

A. YES. IT'S SCANDALOUS BEHAVIOR WHICH ABSOLUTELY
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VIOLATES ALL INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND IS PART OF THE CONTINUING STATE-SPONSORED TERRORISM THAT WE'VE SEEN FROM LIBYA OVER A PERIOD OF MONTHS.

Q. TO REMAIN ON THE MIDDLE EAST, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE MULTI-SIDED SOVIET DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS WITH SO MANY ARAB COUNTRIES AT THE SAME TIME NOW?

A. NO, I DON'T.

Q. DO YOU HAVE A JUDGMENT AS TO WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR YESTERDAY'S KILLING OF THE SECURITY OFFICER AT THE EMBASSY?

A. NO. I GATHER THAT SOMEBODY HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY, BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

Q. THERE'S A REPORT IN THE POST TODAY THAT HE'D RECEIVED A NUMBER OF DEATH THREATS PRIOR TO HIS ASSASSINATION. DO WE KNOW WHO IT WAS THAT CONVEYED THOSE DEATH THREATS?

A. NO.

Q. THE DEPUTY SHERIFF OF ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO, IS OF AMERICAN-ARABIC BACKGROUND -- HIS NAME IS MIKE MONSOUR. HE WAS ARRESTED BY THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES ON APRIL 2. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE CASE?

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A. NO, THAT'S ONE THAT HASN'T.....

Q. HE WAS ARRESTED WITHOUT ANY CHARGES BEING FILED AGAINST HIM. CAN YOU TAKE THE QUESTION AND LOOK INTO THIS ONE?

A. LET ME SEE WHETHER WE MIGHT PROVIDE SOMETHING. SHULTZ

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